

Commuting to Work: Bike? Walk? Drive?

Introduction

In 2005, 45 percent of District residents drove to work. In contrast, nationally 88 percent drove to work, according to the U.S. Census Bureau analysis of data from the 2005 American Community Survey (ACS). This report presents some benefits of commuting choices and comparative data for the top 50 cities with the most workers age 16 and over in relation to those who use public transportation, walk to work, bike to work, carpool and work at home in 2005.

Benefits of Biking and Walking to Work

Biking and walking to work have been attributed to benefit employees in such areas as health care costs, job turnover, morale, productivity, absenteeism, and monthly parking costs. When employers support biking or walking to work, surveys have found that they support an



activity that is highly valued by employees, cost-effective, beneficial for the environment, and a good business decision. Some general benefits are as follows:

- Employees who exercise regularly have lower health care costs and less absenteeism due to increase fitness, weight loss, stress reduction, heart benefits, and increased life expectancy.
- Walking to work or commuting by bicycle can lead to higher productivity and reduced turnover. Employees who walk or bike to work arrive less stressed and more alert than those who drive alone. Happier employees tend to stay with their employers longer, reducing the high costs associated with losing and recruiting staff.
- Walking or biking can reduce pollution and congestion, enhancing our quality of life. Fewer people cycle per capita in the U.S. than in many other parts of the world, and the U.S. is a leader in petroleum consumption. These high levels of consumption are leading to many negative effects on the environment, such as increased emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases.

COMMUTING TO WORK cont. on page 2

by
Joy Phillips
Robert Beasley

COMMUTING TO WORK from page 1

- Walking or biking can help reduce parking costs. Reducing the demand for parking (when employees bike to work) can help lower the cost of employer-paid parking. The cost of providing bicycle parking or storage facilities is also much lower than that for vehicle parking. The square footage necessary for one vehicle parking space can provide enough room to park 12 bicycles. The cost to purchase and maintain spaces for 12 vehicles can total \$70,000 per year; the cost to acquire and maintain space for 12 bicycles can total \$12,000 per year.

Benefits of Public Transportation

American Public Transportation Association reveals that public transportation is undergoing a renaissance in U.S. states and cities but more is needed as the benefits provide a powerful rationale for investing in its future. Some benefits are as follows:

- **Enhancing safety and security** - compared to road systems, transit systems are significantly safer and more secure according to the National Safety Council.



- **Protecting the environment and public health, and reducing pollution through energy conservation** - emissions from vehicles are the largest contributor to smog. People across America are suffering from air pollution caused to a large degree by vehicle emissions. Public transportation reduces pollution, thus protecting the environment and promoting better health.
- **Using transit reduces commuting costs (relative to driving)** - frees up more income for other needs.
- **Freeing up some time** - since you're not always the one driving, there is **extra time** each day to get to work on your to-do list, read the paper, or take a quick nap.
- **Making connection** - encounters on transit with your fellow commuters provides social connection in an increasingly disconnected society.

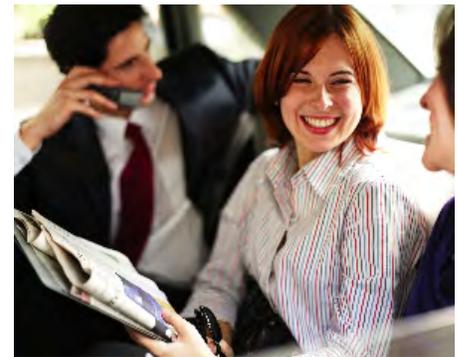
Benefits of Carpooling

Carpooling or shared use of a car particularly for commuting to work has many benefits, some of which are similar to using public transportation. Some benefits are:

- **Increased productivity** - employees who carpool find their stress levels lowered by the increase in camaraderie that comes from riding together. Lowered stress means better health, and better health means fewer

health problems, illnesses and doctors' visits, a combination that benefits employees and employers.

- **Decreased gas consumption** - with rising gas prices carpoolers can combat this problem by splitting gasoline costs and the amount of gas used. Depending on the number of people in the carpool group, this could cut costs by half or more. Pollution would also decrease.
- **Decreased car usage** - less car usage means less maintenance, a longer car life and fewer repairs. Rotating drivers every month or so will enable every carpooler to benefit from this usage. This also means less road congestion.



- **Decreased parking needs** - carpooling can decrease paid parking costs and increase the number of spaces available for persons or other use.

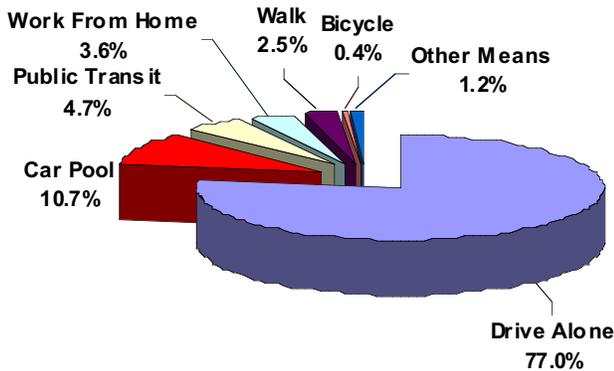
Looking at the Numbers: Commuting Patterns in DC and Other Cities

The Census Bureau reports that about half of the nation's public transportation commuters can be found in 10 of the nation's 50 cities with the most workers age 16 or over: Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington, D.C. These cities account for 2.9 million of the nation's 6.2 million users of public transportation.

Despite rising fuel costs, commuters continued to drive their cars in 2005.

COMMUTING TO WORK cont. on page 3

Fig. 1: How Americans Get to Work



Source: 2005 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

Driving to work was the favored means of commute of nearly nine out of 10 workers (87.7 percent), with most people (77 percent) driving alone (Figure 1). In contrast, 4.7 percent of commuters used public transportation to travel to work in 2005, an increase of about 0.1 percent over 2000 levels.

Thirty-eight percent of District of Columbia workers drove to work alone in 2005, 8 percent carpooled, 38 percent took public transportation, 10 percent walked, 1.7 percent biked and 1 percent used other means (Fig. 2). The remaining 4 percent worked at home. Among those who commuted to work, it took them on average 29.3 minutes to get to work.

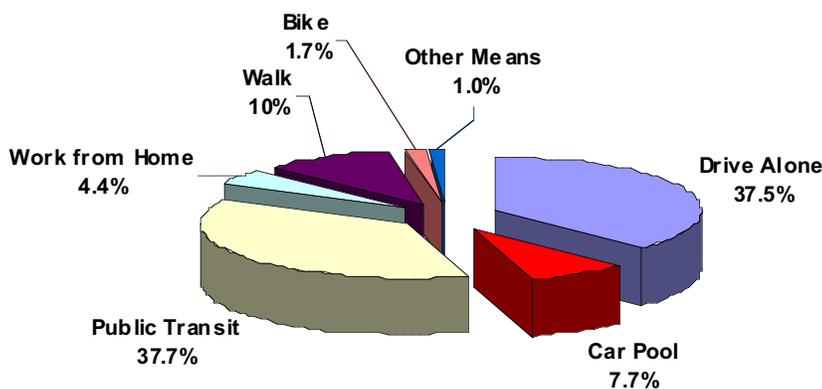
Some other commuter facts of interest include:

- New York City, New York, has the distinction among cities as having the highest percentage of workers who use public transportation. Approximately 54.6 percent of New York City workers use the public transit system, about 12 times the national average of 4.7 percent. The District ranked 2nd among the 50 cities with highest number of workers 16 years and over who use public transit (37.7 percent).
- Nationally, approximately one in 10 of us (10.7 percent) car pool to work. About three-fourths of carpoolers (77.3

percent) ride with just one other person. Large cities with some of the highest rates of car pooling include Fresno, Calif. (15.1 percent); Honolulu (15.6 percent); Mesa, Ariz. (16.7 percent); Phoenix (16.2 percent); and Sacramento, Calif., (15.7 percent). The District ranked 48th among the 50 cities with highest number of workers 16 years and over who carpooled to work (7.7 percent).

- Portland, Ore., has the distinction among large cities as having the highest percentage of bicycle commuters. Approximately 3.5 percent of Portland's workers pedal to work, about eight times the national average of 0.4 percent. The District ranked 7th among the 50 cities with highest number of workers 16 years and over who biked to work (1.7 percent).
- The third most popular option was no commute at all. Nationally, approximately 3.6 percent of us worked from home in 2005. Large cities with high rates of home-based workers included Austin, Texas (5 percent); Colorado Springs, Colo. (4.9 percent); Portland, Ore. (5.3 percent); San Francisco (6.3 percent); and Seattle (5.1 percent). The District ranked 10th among the 50 cities with highest number of workers 16 years and over who worked from home (4.4 percent).
- Boston had the highest percentage among large cities of employees who walk to work (13 percent). Nationally, 2.5 percent of us walked to work, the fourth most popular mode of transportation behind driving and using public transportation. The District ranked 2nd among the 50 cities with highest number of workers 16 years and over who carpooled to work (10.0 percent).

Fig. 2: How DC Residents Get to Work



Source: 2005 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau

District residents must be commended for selecting healthy choices as commuting options. However, although the District is doing much better than most cities there is still a tremendous opportunity for other residents to make smart choices in their commuting options and for city planners and administrators to provide them access to a more favorable environment for transit, walking and biking.

In percentage terms, the District ranked 2nd among the 50 cities with most workers age 16 and over who used public transportation to worked in 2005 (Table 1).

Table 1: Public Transportation Use by Number and Percent for Selected Cities

City	Workers 16+	Public Transportation Use	Percentage
New York city, New York	3,429,194	1,873,298	54.6%
Washington city, District of Columbia	249,865	94,260	37.7%
San Francisco city, California	381,922	124,738	32.7%
Boston city, Massachusetts	253,201	80,141	31.7%
Philadelphia city, Pennsylvania	537,233	139,247	25.9%
Chicago city, Illinois	1,162,550	293,703	25.3%
Baltimore city, Maryland	254,908	48,252	18.9%
Seattle city, Washington	301,704	51,259	17.0%
Oakland city, California	164,169	27,114	16.5%
Portland city, Oregon	257,510	34,195	13.3%
Minneapolis city, Minnesota	189,294	23,597	12.5%
New Orleans city, Louisiana	177,351	21,689	12.2%
Atlanta city, Georgia	186,756	21,825	11.7%
Los Angeles city, California	1,662,238	171,639	10.3%
Honolulu CDP, Hawaii	173,656	17,425	10.0%
Long Beach city, California	208,887	18,547	8.9%
Milwaukee city, Wisconsin	224,682	17,051	7.6%
Detroit city, Michigan	265,852	18,996	7.1%
Denver city, Colorado	270,025	16,266	6.0%
Houston city, Texas	875,252	44,295	5.1%
Austin city, Texas	354,416	17,557	5.0%
Dallas city, Texas	533,371	23,180	4.3%
Sacramento city, California	188,563	6,865	3.6%
San Diego city, California	578,631	20,458	3.5%
Phoenix city, Arizona	662,242	22,782	3.4%
Las Vegas city, Nevada	252,002	8,335	3.3%
Charlotte city, North Carolina	298,601	9,860	3.3%
Tucson city, Arizona	233,526	7,593	3.3%
Louisville/Jefferson County (balance), Kentucky	246,966	7,863	3.2%
San Jose city, California	402,253	12,703	3.2%
Columbus city, Ohio	336,964	9,885	2.9%
San Antonio city, Texas	527,381	15,058	2.9%
Kansas City city, Missouri	216,029	6,050	2.8%
El Paso city, Texas	218,722	5,821	2.7%
Memphis city, Tennessee	279,091	6,886	2.5%
Fresno city, California	185,725	3,342	1.8%
Indianapolis city (balance), Indiana	355,764	6,324	1.8%
Omaha city, Nebraska	186,556	3,234	1.7%
Mesa city, Arizona	196,731	3,369	1.7%
Jacksonville city, Florida	354,269	5,805	1.6%
Albuquerque city, New Mexico	238,207	3,896	1.6%
Nashville-Davidson (balance), Tennessee	257,236	3,558	1.4%
Raleigh city, North Carolina	172,116	2,254	1.3%
Colorado Springs city, Colorado	184,534	2,047	1.1%
Fort Worth city, Texas	276,213	2,960	1.1%
Tulsa city, Oklahoma	175,483	1,801	1.0%
Oklahoma City city, Oklahoma	243,149	2,358	1.0%
Virginia Beach city, Virginia	220,174	1,191	0.5%
Wichita city, Kansas	167,277	877	0.5%
Arlington city, Texas	167,452	673	0.4%

Source: American Community Survey 2005

In percentage terms, the District ranked 7th among the 50 cities with most workers age 16 and over who biked to work in 2005 (Table 2).

Table 2: Bike To Work by Number and Percent for Selected Cities

City	Workers 16+	Bicycle Use	Percentage
Portland city, Oregon	257,510	8,942	3.5%
Minneapolis city, Minnesota	189,294	4,589	2.4%
Seattle city, Washington	301,704	6,963	2.3%
Tucson city, Arizona	233,526	5,230	2.2%
San Francisco city, California	381,922	7,053	1.8%
Sacramento city, California	188,563	3,305	1.8%
Washington city, District of Columbia	249,865	4,336	1.7%
Oakland city, California	164,169	2,529	1.5%
Honolulu CDP, Hawaii	173,656	2,504	1.4%
Denver city, Colorado	270,025	3,814	1.4%
Austin city, Texas	354,416	4,654	1.3%
New Orleans city, Louisiana	177,351	1,712	1.0%
Boston city, Massachusetts	253,201	2,377	0.9%
Philadelphia city, Pennsylvania	537,233	4,778	0.9%
Albuquerque city, New Mexico	238,207	1,918	0.8%
Mesa city, Arizona	196,731	1,485	0.8%
Chicago city, Illinois	1,162,550	7,812	0.7%
Fresno city, California	185,725	1,218	0.7%
Columbus city, Ohio	336,964	2,131	0.6%
San Diego city, California	578,631	3,602	0.6%
Long Beach city, California	208,887	1,261	0.6%
Phoenix city, Arizona	662,242	3,940	0.6%
Los Angeles city, California	1,662,238	9,821	0.6%
Colorado Springs city, Colorado	184,534	1,088	0.6%
Milwaukee city, Wisconsin	224,682	1,290	0.6%
Virginia Beach city, Virginia	220,174	1,230	0.6%
Atlanta city, Georgia	186,756	955	0.5%
New York city, New York	3,429,194	16,468	0.5%
San Jose city, California	402,253	1,622	0.4%
Baltimore city, Maryland	254,908	1,018	0.4%
Las Vegas city, Nevada	252,002	866	0.3%
El Paso city, Texas	218,722	700	0.3%
Raleigh city, North Carolina	172,116	540	0.3%
Houston city, Texas	875,252	2,468	0.3%
Louisville/Jefferson County (balance), Kentucky	246,966	658	0.3%
Tulsa city, Oklahoma	175,483	456	0.3%
Arlington city, Texas	167,452	433	0.3%
Jacksonville city, Florida	354,269	899	0.3%
Fort Worth city, Texas	276,213	645	0.2%
Detroit city, Michigan	265,852	547	0.2%
Dallas city, Texas	533,371	1,029	0.2%
Nashville-Davidson (balance), Tennessee	257,236	448	0.2%
Oklahoma City city, Oklahoma	243,149	422	0.2%
Charlotte city, North Carolina	298,601	481	0.2%
San Antonio city, Texas	527,381	669	0.1%
Omaha city, Nebraska	186,556	217	0.1%
Wichita city, Kansas	167,277	193	0.1%
Indianapolis city (balance), Indiana	355,764	346	0.1%
Memphis city, Tennessee	279,091	214	0.1%
Kansas City city, Missouri	216,029	50	0.0%

Source: American Community Survey 2005

In percentage terms, the District ranked 2nd among the 50 cities with most workers age 16 and over who walked to work in 2005 (Table 3).

Table 3: Walk to Work by Number and Percent for Selected Cities

City	Workers 16+	Walk to Work	Percentage
Boston city, Massachusetts	253,201	31,769	12.5%
Washington city, District of Columbia	249,865	24,905	10.0%
San Francisco city, California	381,922	36,629	9.6%
New York city, New York	3,429,194	323,712	9.4%
Philadelphia city, Pennsylvania	537,233	43,259	8.1%
Honolulu CDP, Hawaii	173,656	12,004	6.9%
Seattle city, Washington	301,704	20,737	6.9%
Minneapolis city, Minnesota	189,294	11,004	5.8%
Chicago city, Illinois	1,162,550	63,580	5.5%
Baltimore city, Maryland	254,908	13,819	5.4%
Denver city, Colorado	270,025	12,967	4.8%
Portland city, Oregon	257,510	11,076	4.3%
Milwaukee city, Wisconsin	224,682	9,586	4.3%
New Orleans city, Louisiana	177,351	7,479	4.2%
Sacramento city, California	188,563	6,905	3.7%
Atlanta city, Georgia	186,756	6,068	3.2%
Los Angeles city, California	1,662,238	52,416	3.2%
Tucson city, Arizona	233,526	7,256	3.1%
Oakland city, California	164,169	4,898	3.0%
Detroit city, Michigan	265,852	6,759	2.5%
Colorado Springs city, Colorado	184,534	4,661	2.5%
Kansas City city, Missouri	216,029	4,796	2.2%
Albuquerque city, New Mexico	238,207	5,173	2.2%
Omaha city, Nebraska	186,556	3,952	2.1%
Mesa city, Arizona	196,731	4,083	2.1%
El Paso city, Texas	218,722	4,531	2.1%
Memphis city, Tennessee	279,091	5,508	2.0%
Tulsa city, Oklahoma	175,483	3,440	2.0%
Wichita city, Kansas	167,277	3,170	1.9%
San Diego city, California	578,631	10,938	1.9%
Indianapolis city (balance), Indiana	355,764	6,722	1.9%
Nashville-Davidson (balance), Tennessee	257,236	4,815	1.9%
Houston city, Texas	875,252	16,357	1.9%
Jacksonville city, Florida	354,269	6,545	1.8%
Dallas city, Texas	533,371	9,675	1.8%
Long Beach city, California	208,887	3,766	1.8%
Las Vegas city, Nevada	252,002	4,541	1.8%
Austin city, Texas	354,416	6,374	1.8%
Raleigh city, North Carolina	172,116	2,913	1.7%
Fresno city, California	185,725	3,094	1.7%
Columbus city, Ohio	336,964	5,528	1.6%
Phoenix city, Arizona	662,242	10,730	1.6%
Charlotte city, North Carolina	298,601	4,762	1.6%
Virginia Beach city, Virginia	220,174	3,429	1.6%
San Jose city, California	402,253	6,131	1.5%
San Antonio city, Texas	527,381	7,873	1.5%
Louisville/Jefferson County (balance), Kentucky	246,966	3,426	1.4%
Oklahoma City city, Oklahoma	243,149	3,316	1.4%
Fort Worth city, Texas	276,213	3,004	1.1%
Arlington city, Texas	167,452	1,425	0.9%

Source: American Community Survey 2005

In percentage terms, the District ranked 48th among the 50 cities with most workers age 16 and over who carpooled to worked in 2005 (Table 4).

Table 4: Carpoolers by Number and Percent for Selected Cities

City	Workers 16+	Carpooled	Percentage
Mesa city, Arizona	196,731	32,855	16.7%
Phoenix city, Arizona	662,242	107,538	16.2%
Sacramento city, California	188,563	29,635	15.7%
Honolulu CDP, Hawaii	173,656	27,103	15.6%
Fresno city, California	185,725	28,015	15.1%
Dallas city, Texas	533,371	77,859	14.6%
Tucson city, Arizona	233,526	33,292	14.3%
Houston city, Texas	875,252	121,895	13.9%
Charlotte city, North Carolina	298,601	40,674	13.6%
Fort Worth city, Texas	276,213	37,332	13.5%
Minneapolis city, Minnesota	189,294	24,277	12.8%
Albuquerque city, New Mexico	238,207	30,371	12.7%
Oklahoma City city, Oklahoma	243,149	30,804	12.7%
San Jose city, California	402,253	49,860	12.4%
New Orleans city, Louisiana	177,351	21,536	12.1%
San Antonio city, Texas	527,381	62,827	11.9%
Jacksonville city, Florida	354,269	41,798	11.8%
Oakland city, California	164,169	19,237	11.7%
Los Angeles city, California	1,662,238	193,662	11.7%
Raleigh city, North Carolina	172,116	19,984	11.6%
El Paso city, Texas	218,722	24,119	11.0%
Baltimore city, Maryland	254,908	27,733	10.9%
Austin city, Texas	354,416	38,269	10.8%
Long Beach city, California	208,887	22,453	10.7%
Indianapolis city (balance), Indiana	355,764	38,191	10.7%
Colorado Springs city, Colorado	184,534	19,804	10.7%
Chicago city, Illinois	1,162,550	124,481	10.7%
Denver city, Colorado	270,025	28,698	10.6%
Milwaukee city, Wisconsin	224,682	23,727	10.6%
Memphis city, Tennessee	279,091	29,175	10.5%
Portland city, Oregon	257,510	26,696	10.4%
Seattle city, Washington	301,704	31,223	10.3%
Las Vegas city, Nevada	252,002	25,524	10.1%
Nashville-Davidson (balance), Tennessee	257,236	26,001	10.1%
Arlington city, Texas	167,452	16,912	10.1%
Virginia Beach city, Virginia	220,174	22,150	10.1%
Detroit city, Michigan	265,852	26,674	10.0%
Philadelphia city, Pennsylvania	537,233	53,656	10.0%
Omaha city, Nebraska	186,556	18,616	10.0%
San Diego city, California	578,631	54,834	9.5%
Atlanta city, Georgia	186,756	17,253	9.2%
Wichita city, Kansas	167,277	15,356	9.2%
Tulsa city, Oklahoma	175,483	16,104	9.2%
Columbus city, Ohio	336,964	29,980	8.9%
Louisville/Jefferson County (balance), Kentucky	246,966	21,795	8.8%
San Francisco city, California	381,922	31,659	8.3%
Kansas City city, Missouri	216,029	17,467	8.1%
Washington city, District of Columbia	249,865	19,246	7.7%
Boston city, Massachusetts	253,201	18,469	7.3%
New York city, New York	3,429,194	208,515	6.1%

Source: American Community Survey 2005

In percentage terms, the District ranked 10th among the 50 cities with most workers age 16 and over who worked at home in 2005 (Table 5).

Table 5: Work at Home by Number and Percent for Selected Cities

City	Workers 16+	Work at Home	Percentage
San Francisco city, California	381,922	24,141	6.3%
Portland city, Oregon	257,510	13,699	5.3%
Seattle city, Washington	301,704	15,403	5.1%
Austin city, Texas	354,416	17,764	5.0%
Colorado Springs city, Colorado	184,534	8,993	4.9%
Atlanta city, Georgia	186,756	8,813	4.7%
Los Angeles city, California	1,662,238	78,382	4.7%
Denver city, Colorado	270,025	12,702	4.7%
San Diego city, California	578,631	26,403	4.6%
Washington city, District of Columbia	249,865	11,110	4.4%
Sacramento city, California	188,563	8,200	4.3%
Oakland city, California	164,169	6,893	4.2%
Charlotte city, North Carolina	298,601	12,114	4.1%
Long Beach city, California	208,887	8,240	3.9%
Raleigh city, North Carolina	172,116	6,779	3.9%
Mesa city, Arizona	196,731	7,322	3.7%
Fresno city, California	185,725	6,790	3.7%
New Orleans city, Louisiana	177,351	6,451	3.6%
Albuquerque city, New Mexico	238,207	8,608	3.6%
New York city, New York	3,429,194	123,639	3.6%
Honolulu CDP, Hawaii	173,656	6,226	3.6%
Tucson city, Arizona	233,526	8,362	3.6%
Kansas City city, Missouri	216,029	7,663	3.5%
Dallas city, Texas	533,371	18,710	3.5%
Nashville-Davidson (balance), Tennessee	257,236	9,015	3.5%
Phoenix city, Arizona	662,242	23,176	3.5%
Wichita city, Kansas	167,277	5,810	3.5%
San Jose city, California	402,253	13,425	3.3%
Omaha city, Nebraska	186,556	6,213	3.3%
Las Vegas city, Nevada	252,002	8,044	3.2%
San Antonio city, Texas	527,381	16,250	3.1%
Virginia Beach city, Virginia	220,174	6,472	2.9%
Minneapolis city, Minnesota	189,294	5,550	2.9%
Arlington city, Texas	167,452	4,893	2.9%
Oklahoma City city, Oklahoma	243,149	7,099	2.9%
Boston city, Massachusetts	253,201	7,361	2.9%
Chicago city, Illinois	1,162,550	33,520	2.9%
Indianapolis city (balance), Indiana	355,764	9,923	2.8%
Columbus city, Ohio	336,964	9,267	2.8%
Houston city, Texas	875,252	23,942	2.7%
Fort Worth city, Texas	276,213	7,435	2.7%
Detroit city, Michigan	265,852	7,051	2.7%
Philadelphia city, Pennsylvania	537,233	14,159	2.6%
Tulsa city, Oklahoma	175,483	4,546	2.6%
Baltimore city, Maryland	254,908	6,233	2.4%
Jacksonville city, Florida	354,269	8,413	2.4%
Milwaukee city, Wisconsin	224,682	5,312	2.4%
Louisville/Jefferson County (balance), Kentucky	246,966	5,171	2.1%
El Paso city, Texas	218,722	4,494	2.1%
Memphis city, Tennessee	279,091	4,767	1.7%

Source: American Community Survey 2005

For additional information contact:
 D.C. Office of Planning, State Data Center
 801 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 4000, Washington, DC 20002
 (202) 442 7600 or (202) 442-7638 FAX www.planning.dc.gov



Government of the District of Columbia